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# Search for Three-Jet Resonances in $pp$ Collisions at $\sqrt{s} = 7$ TeV

The CMS Collaboration<sup>\*</sup>

## Abstract

A model-independent search for three-jet hadronic resonance production in  $pp$  collisions at a center-of-mass energy of 7 TeV has been conducted by the CMS Collaboration at the LHC, using a data sample corresponding to an integrated luminosity of  $35 \text{ pb}^{-1}$ . Events with high jet multiplicity and a large scalar sum of jet transverse momenta are analyzed. The number of expected standard model background events is found to be in good agreement with the observed events. Limits are set on a model describing the production of  $R$ -parity-violating supersymmetric gluino pairs, and gluino masses in the range of 200 to 280  $\text{GeV}/c^2$  are excluded at a 95% confidence level for the first time.

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<sup>\*</sup>See Appendix A for the list of collaboration members



Studies of multijet final states, although experimentally challenging at hadron colliders, are sensitive to many extensions of the standard model (SM). For example, variations of technicolor models, resulting in heavy colored fermions that transform as octets under  $SU(3)_c$ , have been proposed in a variety of forms [1–4]. Other models incorporate  $R$ -parity-violating (RPV) decays of supersymmetric gluinos to three-quark final states, where the gluino represents a colored adjoint Majorana fermion [5–7]. In all cases, these high mass resonances can be pair-produced, yielding a six-jet final state. Recent results from the Tevatron provide limits on gluino RPV decays for masses below  $144 \text{ GeV}/c^2$  [8].

This Letter presents the first results of a dedicated search for three-jet hadronic resonances in multijet events in  $\text{pp}$  collisions. The results are based on a data sample of proton-proton collisions at  $\sqrt{s} = 7 \text{ TeV}$ , corresponding to an integrated luminosity of  $35.1 \pm 1.4 \text{ pb}^{-1}$  [9], collected with the Compact Muon Solenoid (CMS) detector [10] at the Large Hadron Collider (LHC) in the running period from March through November 2010. Events with at least six jets, each with high transverse momentum ( $p_T$ ), are selected and investigated for evidence of three-jet resonances consistent with strongly coupled supersymmetric particle decays. The event selection criteria are optimized in the context of the gluino model mentioned above. However, the generic features of the selection criteria provide a robust model-independent basis that can be applied to many extensions of the SM.

The CMS detector is a multi-purpose apparatus, described in detail in Ref. [10]. Here, we briefly describe the subdetectors most relevant to this analysis. The high-resolution silicon pixel and strip tracker provides charged tracking coverage for  $|\eta| < 2.4$ , where  $\eta = -\ln[\tan(\theta/2)]$  is the pseudorapidity and  $\theta$  is the polar angle measured with respect to the counterclockwise proton beam direction. Immersed in the  $3.8 \text{ T}$  magnetic field of the superconducting solenoid, the tracker provides transverse momentum resolution of approximately 1.5% for charged particles with  $p_T \approx 100 \text{ GeV}/c$ . Energy deposits of the jets are measured using electromagnetic (ECAL) and hadronic (HCAL) calorimeters. The ECAL has a barrel part and two endcaps, is composed of finely segmented crystals and has an energy resolution of better than 0.5% for unconverted photons with transverse energies above  $100 \text{ GeV}$ . The ECAL barrel covers the pseudorapidity range  $|\eta| < 1.4$  with a granularity of  $\Delta\eta \times \Delta\phi = 0.0174 \times 0.0174$ , where  $\phi$  is the azimuthal angle, and the endcaps cover  $1.4 < |\eta| < 3.0$  with a granularity that decreases to  $0.05 \times 0.05$  for  $|\eta| \approx 3.0$ . A preshower detector consisting of two planes of silicon sensors interleaved with a total of three radiation lengths of lead is located in front of the ECAL endcaps. The HCAL extends up to  $|\eta| \approx 5.0$  and its central and endcap regions consist of brass/scintillator sampling calorimeters that cover  $|\eta| < 3.0$  with a granularity of  $\Delta\eta \times \Delta\phi = 0.087 \times 0.087$  for central rapidities. The energy of charged pions and other quasi-stable hadrons can be measured with the calorimeters (ECAL and HCAL combined) with a resolution of  $\Delta E/E \approx 100 \% \sqrt{E \text{ [GeV]}} \oplus 5\%$ .

Events are recorded using a two-tier trigger system. Objects satisfying the requirements at the first level (L1) are passed to the High Level Trigger (HLT) where the total recorded rate is limited to about  $\sim 350 \text{ Hz}$ . Triggers based on the sum of all transverse energy from jets ( $H_T$ ), reconstructed with only calorimeter information, are used to select recorded events. For the L1 trigger, the  $H_T$  threshold is  $50 \text{ GeV}$ . The corresponding threshold for the HLT varies between  $100$  and  $150 \text{ GeV}$ , depending on the run period.

The CMS particle-flow algorithm [11] uses calorimeter information and combines it with reconstructed tracks to identify individual particles such as photons, leptons, and both neutral and charged hadrons within the jets. The energy of photons is directly obtained from the calibrated ECAL measurement. The energy of electrons is determined from a combination of the

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track momentum at the main interaction vertex, the corresponding ECAL cluster energy, and the energy sum of all bremsstrahlung photons attached to the track. The energy of muons is obtained from the corresponding track momentum. The energy of charged hadrons is determined from a combination of the track momentum and the corresponding ECAL and HCAL energy, corrected for zero-suppression effects, and calibrated for the nonlinear response of the calorimeters. Finally, the energy of neutral hadrons is obtained from the corresponding calibrated ECAL and HCAL energy. The particle-flow objects serve as input for jet reconstruction, performed using the anti- $k_T$  algorithm [12] with a distance parameter of 0.5 in  $\eta$ - $\phi$  space.

Jet energy scale corrections [13] derived from Monte Carlo (MC) simulation are applied to account for the nonlinear and nonuniform response of the calorimeters. In data, a small residual correction factor is included to correct for differences in jet response between data and simulation. The combined corrections are on the order of 5–10%, and their corresponding uncertainties range from 3 to 5%, depending on the measured jet’s pseudorapidity and energy. Jet quality criteria [14] are applied to remove misidentified jets arising primarily from calorimeter noise. For both data and simulated signal events, more than 99.8% of all selected jets satisfy these criteria.

Pair-produced gluinos are used to model the signal. Gluino production and decay are simulated using the PYTHIA [15] MC program (v6.420), where each gluino decays to three jets through the  $\lambda_{uds}$  quark RPV coupling. This coupling is set such that the branching ratio  $B$  of the gluino to three light jets is 100%. The mass of the gluino is varied between 200 and 500  $\text{GeV}/c^2$  in 50  $\text{GeV}/c^2$  steps. The leading-order cross section from PYTHIA is 325 pb for a gluino mass of 200  $\text{GeV}/c^2$ , falling to  $\approx 1$  pb for a gluino mass of 500  $\text{GeV}/c^2$ . For the generation of this signal all superpartners except the gluino are taken to be decoupled [7], the natural width of the gluino resonance is taken to be much smaller than the resolution of the detector, and no intermediate particles are produced in the gluino decay. The next-to-leading-order (NLO) correction factors (K factors), with values ranging from 1.7 to 2.2, are calculated using the PROSPINO [16] program and are applied to the leading-order cross sections. Simulation of the CMS detector is performed using Geant4 [17].

Events recorded with the  $H_T$  trigger are required offline to have a good reconstructed primary event vertex [18]. Pair-produced three-jet resonances naturally yield events with high jet multiplicity and large transverse energy. Thus we require events to contain at least six jets, and that the total scalar sum of the  $p_T$  of those jets is larger than 425  $\text{GeV}/c$ . The latter requirement ensures that the trigger is fully efficient for these events. Jets are required to have  $p_T > 45 \text{ GeV}/c$  and  $|\eta| < 3.0$ , which also minimizes the effects from multiple proton-proton interactions.

To reconstruct the gluinos, the six highest- $p_T$  jets are combined into all possible unique triplet combinations, resulting in 20 combinations of jet triplets. For signal events, each of the pair-produced gluinos corresponds to one of these 20 jet triplets, even in the case where all six jets come solely from the decay of these particles, leaving the 18 uncorrelated jet triplets as combinatorial background. Thus, the overall background arises not only from SM events, described by quantum chromodynamics (QCD), but also from spurious jet triplet combinations in signal events themselves. We impose additional requirements on each triplet to increase the signal sensitivity, while retaining as many signal triplets as possible. The invariant mass of background triplets is found to scale with the respective scalar sum of jet  $p_T$ , while for signal triplets the mass is constant. To reduce background, we therefore require each jet triplet to satisfy the following relation:

$$M_{jjj} < \sum_{i=1}^3 |p_T|_i - \Delta, \quad (1)$$

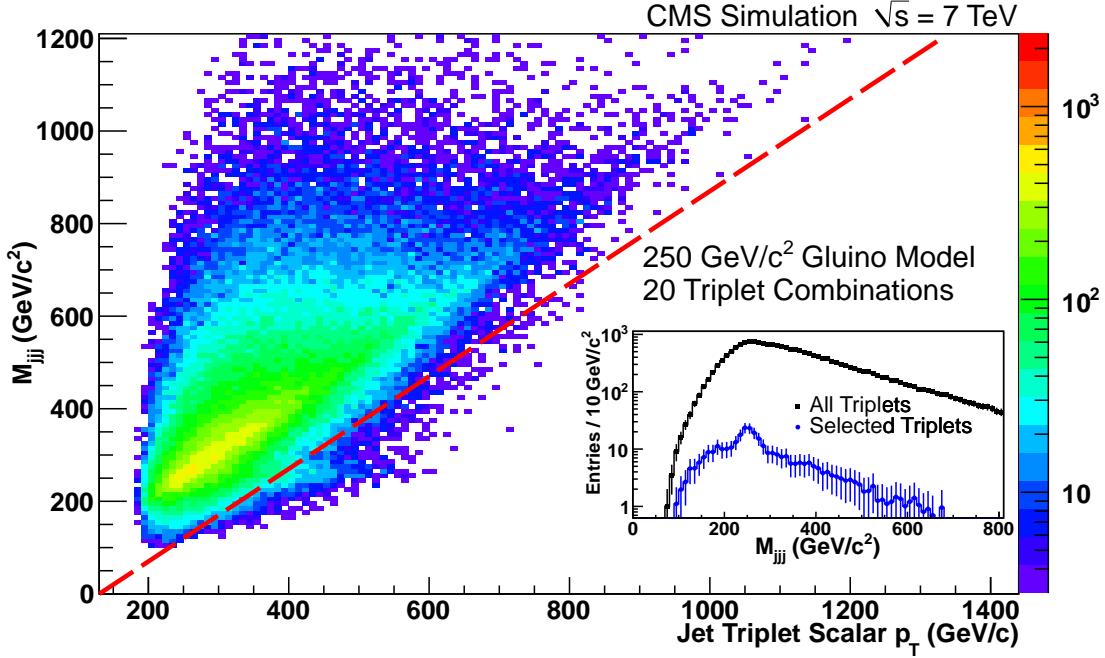


Figure 1: Simulated triplet jet invariant mass  $M_{jjj}$  versus the triplet scalar  $p_T$  of all 20 triplets, for a gluino mass of  $250 \text{ GeV}/c^2$ . All triplets falling to the right of the red dashed line pass the requirement of Eq. 1. In the insert, the invariant mass distribution for the same gluino mass is shown both before and after Eq. 1 is imposed.

where  $M_{jjj}$  is the triplet invariant mass,  $\sum_{i=1}^3 |p_T|_i$  is the scalar sum of jet  $p_T$  in the triplet (triplet scalar  $p_T$ ), and  $\Delta$  is an offset adjusted to optimize signal sensitivity. Figure 1 shows the simulated triplet invariant mass versus the triplet scalar  $p_T$  for a gluino mass of  $250 \text{ GeV}/c^2$ , and the insert displays the invariant mass distribution before and after the requirement. For each event, all 20 triplet combinations are included. The value of  $\Delta$  is determined by maximizing the ratio of the number of signal triplets to the sum of the number of signal plus background triplets in a one standard deviation ( $\sigma$ ) window around the center of the gluino mass peak. A common value of  $\Delta = 130 \text{ GeV}/c^2$  is taken for all gluino masses considered, which gives an efficiency in signal events for triplets of 1 to 5%, and a background triplet selection efficiency of less than 0.05%.

Even after the final selection, background remains from both QCD multijet events and uncorrelated triplets in gluino signal events. The latter only contribute minimally, and the shape of their distribution is found to be consistent with that of the dominant background, from QCD multijet events. These QCD multijet events arise from hard two-particle interactions combined with initial- and final-state radiation in the form of gluon jets. Although the cross section falls with increasing jet multiplicity ( $N_{\text{jet}}$ ), the underlying kinematic distributions are essentially the same among these events. Thus, we use a rescaled mass distribution of triplets in events with  $N_{\text{jet}} = 4$ , where the signal contributions are minimal, to estimate the shape of the background. Specifically, we select events in data with  $N_{\text{jet}} = 4$  that satisfy all other selection criteria, form jet triplets, and require each to pass Eq. 1. The  $M_{jjj}$  values of these triplets are multiplied by the ratio of the average triplet scalar  $p_T$  in data for events with  $N_{\text{jet}} \geq 6$  to the events with  $N_{\text{jet}} = 4$ , to account for expected minor kinematic differences between the two samples. The resulting  $M_{jjj}$  distribution is then fit to an exponential function of the form:  $e^{P_0 + P_1 M_{jjj}}$ , where  $P_0$  and  $P_1$  are free parameters. The slope  $P_1$  of the exponential function in the  $N_{\text{jet}} \geq 6$  sample

is constrained to be equal to that found for the scaled  $N_{\text{jet}} = 4$  fit within its uncertainties. This is verified in QCD simulation, and as a cross-check in data, we apply this procedure to predict the shape of the  $M_{jjj}$  distribution for an  $N_{\text{jet}} = 5$  sample, where the QCD multijet background is also expected to dominate, and find good agreement. To verify that the choice of the background model does not bias the derived limit, the exponential function is tested on an  $N_{\text{jet}} \geq 6$  sample, defined by the standard selection criteria without the requirement of Eq. 1 imposed. The parameterization is found to be in agreement with the data in the fitted region, with the slope of the fit consistent with those of the  $N_{\text{jet}} = 4$  and  $N_{\text{jet}} = 5$  samples.

To estimate the number of signal events expected after all selection criteria are applied, the sum of a Gaussian function that represents the signal and the exponential function that models the background is fitted to the simulated  $M_{jjj}$  distribution for each gluino mass. The fit is performed in the range  $170 < M_{jjj} < 800 \text{ GeV}/c^2$ . The width of the Gaussian function modeling the signal varies according to the detector resolution, and gluinos of mass from 200 to 500  $\text{GeV}/c^2$  correspond to widths from 10 to 25  $\text{GeV}/c^2$ . The integral of the Gaussian component provides the estimate for the expected number of signal triplets produced, and the value of this integral, divided by the number of signal events generated, determines the signal acceptance for each gluino mass. The signal acceptance is parameterized using a second-order polynomial as a function of gluino mass, and the acceptance ranges from 0.4 to 5% as the gluino mass increases from 200 to 500  $\text{GeV}/c^2$ .

The systematic uncertainty on the signal acceptance is evaluated in the following way. An uncertainty related to the jet energy scale [13] is evaluated by varying the jet energy scale correction within its uncertainties, then recalculating the acceptance for different gluino mass values. The largest difference with respect to the nominal acceptance is taken as the systematic uncertainty and ranges from 7 to 16%. The amount of initial- and final-state radiation is increased and decreased according to a standard prescription [19], and the associated uncertainty is quantified in a similar manner to that described for the jet energy scale uncertainties. The difference of 2 to 4% with respect to the nominal acceptance is taken as the systematic uncertainty. To determine the effects of additional proton-proton interactions on the signal acceptance, signal samples are generated with the number of interactions per bunch crossing in the simulation set to the average of their distribution in the data. Applying the acceptance calculation on this sample leads to differences of 1 to 6%, which are taken as uncertainties. These contributions, combined with those from the luminosity measurement (4%) and choice of parton distribution function set (4%), give a total systematic uncertainty on the signal yield between 10 and 19%, depending on the value of the gluino mass. Other effects, such as additional background parameterizations and variations of the fit range, were also tested and found to be negligible.

Figure 2 shows the three-jet invariant mass distribution for the  $N_{\text{jet}} \geq 6$  sample with all selection criteria applied, and the exponential fit superimposed. The simulated signal distribution for a gluino mass of  $250 \text{ GeV}/c^2$ , normalized to the integrated luminosity of the data sample, is also shown. Because agreement is observed between the data and expected QCD background, a limit-setting procedure is performed.

Upper limits are placed on the cross section  $\sigma_S$  for the production of three-jet resonances in the  $N_{\text{jet}} \geq 6$  sample using a Bayesian approach. The background model parameters and their corresponding uncertainties are taken from the fit of the exponential function to the  $N_{\text{jet}} \geq 6$  distribution, constrained by the  $N_{\text{jet}} = 4$  sample, with all selection criteria applied. The uncertainties on the two parameters that describe the background shape, namely the exponential slope and normalization, are included as Gaussian priors. The central value is set to the best fit value and the width to one standard deviation. The range is truncated at  $\pm 3\sigma$ . In addition to

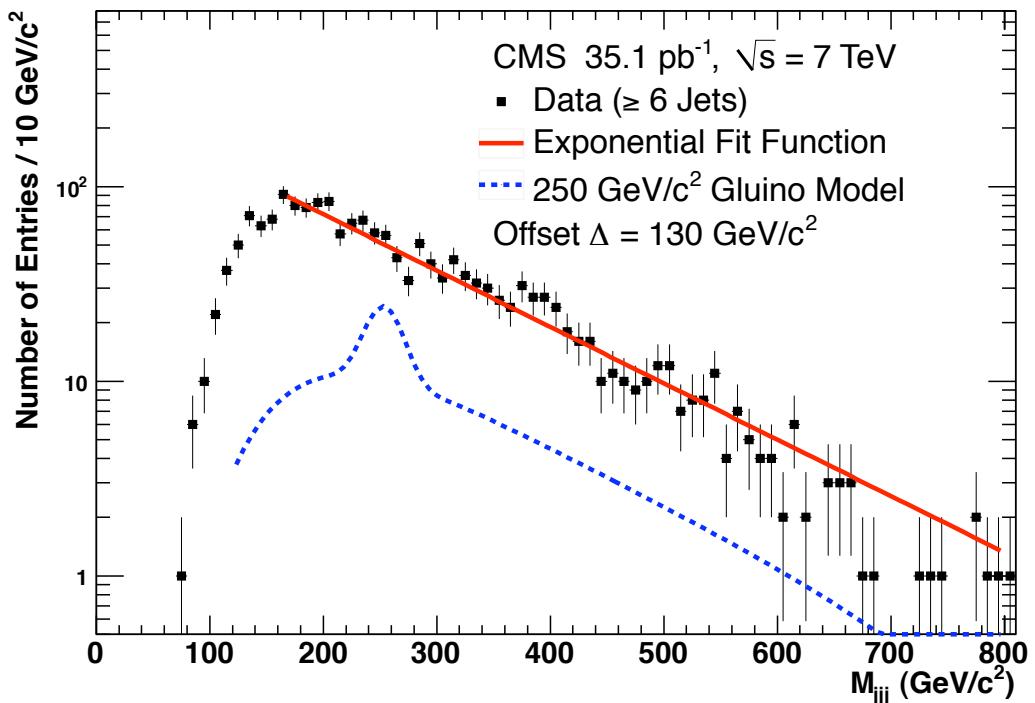


Figure 2: Three-jet invariant mass distribution of triplets passing all selection criteria for the  $N_{\text{jet}} \geq 6$  data sample. An exponential function representing the background shape, constrained from the  $N_{\text{jet}} = 4$  distribution, and the expectation for the  $250 \text{ GeV}/c^2$  gluino signal are also shown.

Table 1: Observed and expected 95% CL upper limits on the cross section times branching ratio for the pair production of gluinos with masses ( $M_{jjj}$ ) ranging from 200 to 500  $\text{GeV}/c^2$ .

$M_{jjj}$ ( $\text{GeV}/c^2$ )	Observed (pb)	Expected (pb)	$M_{jjj}$ ( $\text{GeV}/c^2$ )	Observed (pb)	Expected (pb)
200	383	387	360	82	40
210	273	287	370	83	36
220	214	219	380	80	33
230	200	178	390	73	29
240	184	146	400	62	26
250	132	120	410	48	24
260	88	106	420	34	23
270	72	96	430	24	21
280	73	84	440	17	19
290	79	76	450	13	17
300	86	67	460	12	16
310	89	62	470	12	15
320	87	56	480	13	14
330	82	51	490	14	13
340	80	48	500	14	12
350	82	45			

the background parameters, priors are included for the acceptance and integrated luminosity.

The integrated luminosity, acceptance, signal width and the two parameters of the exponential background distribution are all treated as nuisance parameters. The likelihood is combined with the prior and nuisance parameters, and then marginalized to give the posterior density for  $\sigma_S$ . Integrating the posterior density to 0.95 of the total gives the 95% confidence level (CL) limit for  $\sigma_S$ . Marginalization and integration of the posterior density are performed with a Markov chain MC integration technique using RooStats [20].

To determine the expected limits, a large set of pseudo-experiments (PEs) is generated using the background-only model. For every PE, each of the two parameters associated with the exponential is varied by generating a random number distributed according to a Gaussian probability distribution function centered at the central value, with a width corresponding to the associated uncertainty. The total number of events in a given PE is extracted according to the Poisson distribution with mean value equal to the number of events predicted by the exponential function in the fitted range. The same upper limit calculation performed on data is repeated for each PE at each mass, and the median of the upper limit distribution for all PEs is the expected limit.

The observed and expected 95% CL upper limits on the gluino pair production cross section times branching ratio as a function of gluino mass are presented in Fig. 3 and Table 1. The corresponding 95% CL lower limit on the gluino mass is set by finding the mass value at which the 95% CL limit line crosses that of the NLO gluino cross section. We thus exclude at the 95% CL gluino masses in the range 200 to 280  $\text{GeV}/c^2$ , with an expected lower limit of 270  $\text{GeV}/c^2$ . The most significant excess occurs for a mass around 390  $\text{GeV}/c^2$ , corresponding to a significance of 1.9 standard deviations, when the so-called look-elsewhere effect [21] is taken into account.

In summary, a search for three-jet hadronic resonance production in pp collisions at a center-of-mass energy of 7 TeV has been conducted by the CMS Collaboration, using a data sample corresponding to  $35 \text{ pb}^{-1}$ . Events having the properties of high jet multiplicity and large scalar sum of jet  $p_T$ , which are expected signatures of high mass hadronic resonances, are analyzed for

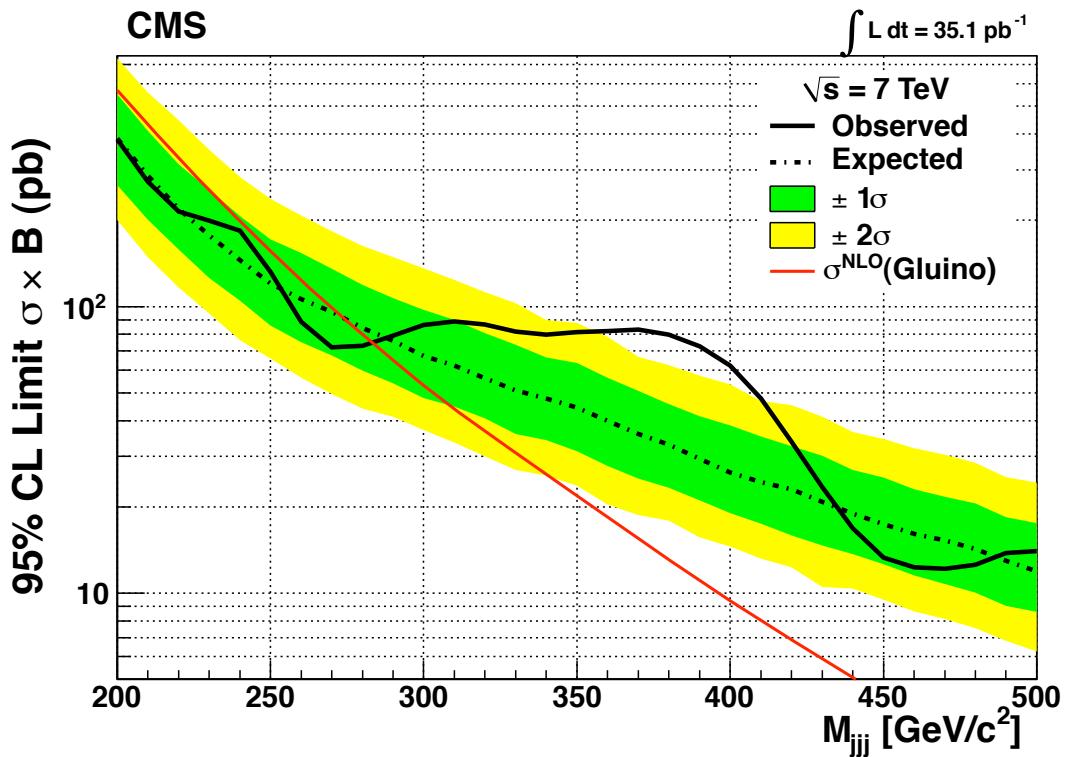


Figure 3: Observed and expected 95% CL upper limits on the cross section for gluino pair production through RPV decays, where the branching ratio of the gluino to three jets is 100%. Also shown are the  $\pm 1\sigma$  and  $\pm 2\sigma$  bands on the expected limit, as well as the theoretical NLO cross section for gluino production.

the presence of signal events with a model-independent approach. The number of expected SM background events is found to be in good agreement with the observed events. The production of gluinos decaying through the  $\lambda_{uds}$  RPV coupling is excluded for masses between 200 and 280  $\text{GeV}/c^2$  at 95% CL. These are complementary to recent results from the Tevatron, which rule out gluino masses below 144  $\text{GeV}/c^2$  [8], and these limits are the first from a dedicated search of this kind in  $pp$  collisions.

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## A The CMS Collaboration

### **Yerevan Physics Institute, Yerevan, Armenia**

S. Chatrchyan, V. Khachatryan, A.M. Sirunyan, A. Tumasyan

### **Institut für Hochenergiephysik der OeAW, Wien, Austria**

W. Adam, T. Bergauer, M. Dragicevic, J. Erö, C. Fabjan, M. Friedl, R. Frühwirth, V.M. Ghete, J. Hammer<sup>1</sup>, S. Hänsel, M. Hoch, N. Hörmann, J. Hrubec, M. Jeitler, W. Kiesenhofer, M. Krammer, D. Liko, I. Mikulec, M. Pernicka, B. Rahbaran, H. Rohringer, R. Schöfbeck, J. Strauss, A. Taurok, F. Teischinger, P. Wagner, W. Waltenberger, G. Walzel, E. Widl, C.-E. Wulz

### **National Centre for Particle and High Energy Physics, Minsk, Belarus**

V. Mossolov, N. Shumeiko, J. Suarez Gonzalez

### **Universiteit Antwerpen, Antwerpen, Belgium**

S. Bansal, L. Benucci, E.A. De Wolf, X. Janssen, T. Maes, L. Mucibello, S. Ochesanu, B. Roland, R. Rougny, M. Selvaggi, H. Van Haevermaet, P. Van Mechelen, N. Van Remortel

### **Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Brussel, Belgium**

F. Blekman, S. Blyweert, J. D'Hondt, O. Devroede, R. Gonzalez Suarez, A. Kalogeropoulos, M. Maes, W. Van Doninck, P. Van Mulders, G.P. Van Onsem, I. Villella

### **Université Libre de Bruxelles, Bruxelles, Belgium**

O. Charaf, B. Clerbaux, G. De Lentdecker, V. Dero, A.P.R. Gay, G.H. Hammad, T. Hreus, P.E. Marage, A. Raval, L. Thomas, C. Vander Velde, P. Vanlaer

### **Ghent University, Ghent, Belgium**

V. Adler, A. Cimmino, S. Costantini, M. Grunewald, B. Klein, J. Lellouch, A. Marinov, J. Mccartin, D. Ryckbosch, F. Thyssen, M. Tytgat, L. Vanelderen, P. Verwilligen, S. Walsh, N. Zaganidis

### **Université Catholique de Louvain, Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium**

S. Basegmez, G. Bruno, J. Caudron, L. Ceard, E. Cortina Gil, J. De Favereau De Jeneret, C. Delaere, D. Favart, A. Giannanco, G. Grégoire, J. Hollar, V. Lemaitre, J. Liao, O. Militaru, C. Nuttens, S. Ovyn, D. Pagano, A. Pin, K. Piotrzkowski, N. Schul

### **Université de Mons, Mons, Belgium**

N. Belyi, T. Caebergs, E. Daubie

### **Centro Brasileiro de Pesquisas Fisicas, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil**

G.A. Alves, L. Brito, D. De Jesus Damiao, M.E. Pol, M.H.G. Souza

### **Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil**

W.L. Aldá Júnior, W. Carvalho, E.M. Da Costa, C. De Oliveira Martins, S. Fonseca De Souza, L. Mundim, H. Nogima, V. Oguri, W.L. Prado Da Silva, A. Santoro, S.M. Silva Do Amaral, A. Sznajder

### **Instituto de Fisica Teorica, Universidade Estadual Paulista, Sao Paulo, Brazil**

C.A. Bernardes<sup>2</sup>, F.A. Dias, T. Dos Anjos Costa<sup>2</sup>, T.R. Fernandez Perez Tomei, E. M. Gregores<sup>2</sup>, C. Lagana, F. Marinho, P.G. Mercadante<sup>2</sup>, S.F. Novaes, Sandra S. Padula

### **Institute for Nuclear Research and Nuclear Energy, Sofia, Bulgaria**

N. Darmenov<sup>1</sup>, V. Genchev<sup>1</sup>, P. Iaydjiev<sup>1</sup>, S. Piperov, M. Rodozov, S. Stoykova, G. Sultanov, V. Tcholakov, R. Trayanov

**University of Sofia, Sofia, Bulgaria**

A. Dimitrov, R. Hadjiiska, A. Karadzhinova, V. Kozuharov, L. Litov, M. Mateev, B. Pavlov, P. Petkov

**Institute of High Energy Physics, Beijing, China**

J.G. Bian, G.M. Chen, H.S. Chen, C.H. Jiang, D. Liang, S. Liang, X. Meng, J. Tao, J. Wang, J. Wang, X. Wang, Z. Wang, H. Xiao, M. Xu, J. Zang, Z. Zhang

**State Key Lab. of Nucl. Phys. and Tech., Peking University, Beijing, China**

Y. Ban, S. Guo, Y. Guo, W. Li, Y. Mao, S.J. Qian, H. Teng, B. Zhu, W. Zou

**Universidad de Los Andes, Bogota, Colombia**

A. Cabrera, B. Gomez Moreno, A.A. Ocampo Rios, A.F. Osorio Oliveros, J.C. Sanabria

**Technical University of Split, Split, Croatia**

N. Godinovic, D. Lelas, K. Lelas, R. Plestina<sup>3</sup>, D. Polic, I. Puljak

**University of Split, Split, Croatia**

Z. Antunovic, M. Dzelalija

**Institute Rudjer Boskovic, Zagreb, Croatia**

V. Brigljevic, S. Duric, K. Kadija, S. Morovic

**University of Cyprus, Nicosia, Cyprus**

A. Attikis, M. Galanti, J. Mousa, C. Nicolaou, F. Ptochos, P.A. Razis

**Charles University, Prague, Czech Republic**

M. Finger, M. Finger Jr.

**Academy of Scientific Research and Technology of the Arab Republic of Egypt, Egyptian Network of High Energy Physics, Cairo, Egypt**

Y. Assran<sup>4</sup>, A. Ellithi Kamel, S. Khalil<sup>5</sup>, M.A. Mahmoud<sup>6</sup>

**National Institute of Chemical Physics and Biophysics, Tallinn, Estonia**

A. Hektor, M. Kadastik, M. Müntel, M. Raidal, L. Rebane, A. Tiko

**Department of Physics, University of Helsinki, Helsinki, Finland**

V. Azzolini, P. Eerola, G. Fedi

**Helsinki Institute of Physics, Helsinki, Finland**

S. Czellar, J. Häkkinen, A. Heikkilä, V. Karimäki, R. Kinnunen, M.J. Kortelainen, T. Lampén, K. Lassila-Perini, S. Lehti, T. Lindén, P. Luukka, T. Mäenpää, E. Tuominen, J. Tuominiemi, E. Tuovinen, D. Ungaro, L. Wendland

**Lappeenranta University of Technology, Lappeenranta, Finland**

K. Banzuzi, A. Karjalainen, A. Korpela, T. Tuuva

**Laboratoire d'Annecy-le-Vieux de Physique des Particules, IN2P3-CNRS, Annecy-le-Vieux, France**

D. Sillou

**DSM/IRFU, CEA/Saclay, Gif-sur-Yvette, France**

M. Besancon, S. Choudhury, M. Dejardin, D. Denegri, B. Fabbro, J.L. Faure, F. Ferri, S. Ganjour, F.X. Gentit, A. Givernaud, P. Gras, G. Hamel de Monchenault, P. Jarry, E. Locci, J. Malcles, M. Marionneau, L. Millischer, J. Rander, A. Rosowsky, I. Shreyber, M. Titov, P. Verrecchia

**Laboratoire Leprince-Ringuet, Ecole Polytechnique, IN2P3-CNRS, Palaiseau, France**

S. Baffioni, F. Beaudette, L. Benhabib, L. Bianchini, M. Bluj<sup>7</sup>, C. Broutin, P. Busson, C. Charlot, T. Dahms, L. Dobrzynski, S. Elgammal, R. Granier de Cassagnac, M. Haguenauer, P. Miné, C. Mironov, C. Ochando, P. Paganini, D. Sabes, R. Salerno, Y. Sirois, C. Thiebaux, B. Wyslouch<sup>8</sup>, A. Zabi

**Institut Pluridisciplinaire Hubert Curien, Université de Strasbourg, Université de Haute Alsace Mulhouse, CNRS/IN2P3, Strasbourg, France**

J.-L. Agram<sup>9</sup>, J. Andrea, D. Bloch, D. Bodin, J.-M. Brom, M. Cardaci, E.C. Chabert, C. Collard, E. Conte<sup>9</sup>, F. Drouhin<sup>9</sup>, C. Ferro, J.-C. Fontaine<sup>9</sup>, D. Gelé, U. Goerlach, S. Greder, P. Juillot, M. Karim<sup>9</sup>, A.-C. Le Bihan, Y. Mikami, P. Van Hove

**Centre de Calcul de l’Institut National de Physique Nucléaire et de Physique des Particules (IN2P3), Villeurbanne, France**

F. Fassi, D. Mercier

**Université de Lyon, Université Claude Bernard Lyon 1, CNRS-IN2P3, Institut de Physique Nucléaire de Lyon, Villeurbanne, France**

C. Baty, S. Beauceron, N. Beaupere, M. Bedjidian, O. Bondu, G. Boudoul, D. Boumediene, H. Brun, J. Chasserat, R. Chierici, D. Contardo, P. Depasse, H. El Mamouni, J. Fay, S. Gascon, B. Ille, T. Kurca, T. Le Grand, M. Lethuillier, L. Mirabito, S. Perries, V. Sordini, S. Tosi, Y. Tschudi, P. Verdier

**Institute of High Energy Physics and Informatization, Tbilisi State University, Tbilisi, Georgia**

D. Lomidze

**RWTH Aachen University, I. Physikalisches Institut, Aachen, Germany**

G. Anagnostou, S. Beranek, M. Edelhoff, L. Feld, N. Heracleous, O. Hindrichs, R. Jussen, K. Klein, J. Merz, N. Mohr, A. Ostapchuk, A. Perieanu, F. Raupach, J. Sammet, S. Schael, D. Sprenger, H. Weber, M. Weber, B. Wittmer

**RWTH Aachen University, III. Physikalisches Institut A, Aachen, Germany**

M. Ata, E. Dietz-Laursonn, M. Erdmann, T. Hebbeker, C. Heidemann, A. Hinzmann, K. Hoepfner, T. Klimkovich, D. Klingebiel, P. Kreuzer, D. Lanske<sup>†</sup>, J. Lingemann, C. Magass, M. Merschmeyer, A. Meyer, P. Papacz, H. Pieta, H. Reithler, S.A. Schmitz, L. Sonnenschein, J. Steggemann, D. Teyssier

**RWTH Aachen University, III. Physikalisches Institut B, Aachen, Germany**

M. Bontenackels, M. Davids, M. Duda, G. Flügge, H. Geenen, M. Giffels, W. Haj Ahmad, D. Heydhausen, F. Hoehle, B. Kargoll, T. Kress, Y. Kuessel, A. Linn, A. Nowack, L. Perchalla, O. Pooth, J. Rennefeld, P. Sauerland, A. Stahl, D. Tornier, M.H. Zoeller

**Deutsches Elektronen-Synchrotron, Hamburg, Germany**

M. Aldaya Martin, W. Behrenhoff, U. Behrens, M. Bergholz<sup>10</sup>, A. Bethani, K. Borras, A. Cakir, A. Campbell, E. Castro, D. Dammann, G. Eckerlin, D. Eckstein, A. Flossdorf, G. Flucke, A. Geiser, J. Hauk, H. Jung<sup>1</sup>, M. Kasemann, I. Katkov<sup>11</sup>, P. Katsas, C. Kleinwort, H. Kluge, A. Knutsson, M. Krämer, D. Krücker, E. Kuznetsova, W. Lange, W. Lohmann<sup>10</sup>, R. Mankel, M. Marienfeld, I.-A. Melzer-Pellmann, A.B. Meyer, J. Mnich, A. Mussgiller, J. Olzem, A. Petrukhin, D. Pitzl, A. Raspereza, M. Rosin, R. Schmidt<sup>10</sup>, T. Schoerner-Sadenius, N. Sen, A. Spiridonov, M. Stein, J. Tomaszewska, R. Walsh, C. Wissing

**University of Hamburg, Hamburg, Germany**

C. Autermann, V. Blobel, S. Bobrovskyi, J. Draeger, H. Enderle, U. Gebbert, M. Görner,

T. Hermanns, K. Kaschube, G. Kaussen, H. Kirschenmann, R. Klanner, J. Lange, B. Mura, S. Naumann-Emme, F. Nowak, N. Pietsch, C. Sander, H. Schettler, P. Schleper, E. Schlieckau, M. Schröder, T. Schum, H. Stadie, G. Steinbrück, J. Thomsen

**Institut für Experimentelle Kernphysik, Karlsruhe, Germany**

C. Barth, J. Bauer, J. Berger, V. Buege, T. Chwalek, W. De Boer, A. Dierlamm, G. Dirkes, M. Feindt, J. Gruschke, C. Hackstein, F. Hartmann, M. Heinrich, H. Held, K.H. Hoffmann, S. Honc, J.R. Komaragiri, T. Kuhr, D. Martschei, S. Mueller, Th. Müller, M. Niegel, O. Oberst, A. Oehler, J. Ott, T. Peiffer, G. Quast, K. Rabbertz, F. Ratnikov, N. Ratnikova, M. Renz, C. Saout, A. Scheurer, P. Schieferdecker, F.-P. Schilling, G. Schott, H.J. Simonis, F.M. Stober, D. Troendle, J. Wagner-Kuhr, T. Weiler, M. Zeise, V. Zhukov<sup>11</sup>, E.B. Ziebarth

**Institute of Nuclear Physics "Demokritos", Aghia Paraskevi, Greece**

G. Daskalakis, T. Geralis, S. Kesisoglou, A. Kyriakis, D. Loukas, I. Manolakos, A. Markou, C. Markou, C. Mavrommatis, E. Ntomari, E. Petrakou

**University of Athens, Athens, Greece**

L. Gouskos, T.J. Mertzimekis, A. Panagiotou, N. Saoulidou, E. Stiliaris

**University of Ioánnina, Ioánnina, Greece**

I. Evangelou, C. Foudas, P. Kokkas, N. Manthos, I. Papadopoulos, V. Patras, F.A. Triantis

**KFKI Research Institute for Particle and Nuclear Physics, Budapest, Hungary**

A. Aranyi, G. Bencze, L. Boldizsar, C. Hajdu<sup>1</sup>, P. Hidas, D. Horvath<sup>12</sup>, A. Kapusi, K. Krajczar<sup>13</sup>, F. Sikler<sup>1</sup>, G.I. Veres<sup>13</sup>, G. Vesztregombi<sup>13</sup>

**Institute of Nuclear Research ATOMKI, Debrecen, Hungary**

N. Beni, J. Molnar, J. Palinkas, Z. Szillasi, V. Veszpremi

**University of Debrecen, Debrecen, Hungary**

P. Raics, Z.L. Trocsanyi, B. Ujvari

**Panjab University, Chandigarh, India**

S.B. Beri, V. Bhatnagar, N. Dhingra, R. Gupta, M. Jindal, M. Kaur, J.M. Kohli, M.Z. Mehta, N. Nishu, L.K. Saini, A. Sharma, A.P. Singh, J. Singh, S.P. Singh

**University of Delhi, Delhi, India**

S. Ahuja, B.C. Choudhary, P. Gupta, S. Jain, A. Kumar, A. Kumar, M. Naimuddin, K. Ranjan, R.K. Shivpuri

**Saha Institute of Nuclear Physics, Kolkata, India**

S. Banerjee, S. Bhattacharya, S. Dutta, B. Gomber, S. Jain, R. Khurana, S. Sarkar

**Bhabha Atomic Research Centre, Mumbai, India**

R.K. Choudhury, D. Dutta, S. Kailas, V. Kumar, P. Mehta, A.K. Mohanty<sup>1</sup>, L.M. Pant, P. Shukla

**Tata Institute of Fundamental Research - EHEP, Mumbai, India**

T. Aziz, M. Guchait<sup>14</sup>, A. Gurtu, M. Maity<sup>15</sup>, D. Majumder, G. Majumder, K. Mazumdar, G.B. Mohanty, A. Saha, K. Sudhakar, N. Wickramage

**Tata Institute of Fundamental Research - HEGR, Mumbai, India**

S. Banerjee, S. Dugad, N.K. Mondal

**Institute for Research and Fundamental Sciences (IPM), Tehran, Iran**

H. Arfaei, H. Bakhshiansohi<sup>16</sup>, S.M. Etesami, A. Fahim<sup>16</sup>, M. Hashemi, H. Hesari, A. Jafari<sup>16</sup>,

---

M. Khakzad, A. Mohammadi<sup>17</sup>, M. Mohammadi Najafabadi, S. Paktinat Mehdiabadi, B. Safarzadeh, M. Zeinali<sup>18</sup>

**INFN Sezione di Bari <sup>a</sup>, Università di Bari <sup>b</sup>, Politecnico di Bari <sup>c</sup>, Bari, Italy**

M. Abbrescia<sup>a,b</sup>, L. Barbone<sup>a,b</sup>, C. Calabria<sup>a,b</sup>, A. Colaleo<sup>a</sup>, D. Creanza<sup>a,c</sup>, N. De Filippis<sup>a,c,1</sup>, M. De Palma<sup>a,b</sup>, L. Fiore<sup>a</sup>, G. Iaselli<sup>a,c</sup>, L. Lusito<sup>a,b</sup>, G. Maggi<sup>a,c</sup>, M. Maggi<sup>a</sup>, N. Manna<sup>a,b</sup>, B. Marangelli<sup>a,b</sup>, S. My<sup>a,c</sup>, S. Nuzzo<sup>a,b</sup>, N. Pacifico<sup>a,b</sup>, G.A. Pierro<sup>a</sup>, A. Pompili<sup>a,b</sup>, G. Pugliese<sup>a,c</sup>, F. Romano<sup>a,c</sup>, G. Roselli<sup>a,b</sup>, G. Selvaggi<sup>a,b</sup>, L. Silvestris<sup>a</sup>, R. Trentadue<sup>a</sup>, S. Tupputi<sup>a,b</sup>, G. Zito<sup>a</sup>

**INFN Sezione di Bologna <sup>a</sup>, Università di Bologna <sup>b</sup>, Bologna, Italy**

G. Abbiendi<sup>a</sup>, A.C. Benvenuti<sup>a</sup>, D. Bonacorsi<sup>a</sup>, S. Braibant-Giacomelli<sup>a,b</sup>, L. Brigliadori<sup>a</sup>, P. Capiluppi<sup>a,b</sup>, A. Castro<sup>a,b</sup>, F.R. Cavallo<sup>a</sup>, M. Cuffiani<sup>a,b</sup>, G.M. Dallavalle<sup>a</sup>, F. Fabbri<sup>a</sup>, A. Fanfani<sup>a,b</sup>, D. Fasanella<sup>a</sup>, P. Giacomelli<sup>a</sup>, M. Giunta<sup>a</sup>, C. Grandi<sup>a</sup>, S. Marcellini<sup>a</sup>, G. Masetti<sup>b</sup>, M. Meneghelli<sup>a,b</sup>, A. Montanari<sup>a</sup>, F.L. Navarria<sup>a,b</sup>, F. Odorici<sup>a</sup>, A. Perrotta<sup>a</sup>, F. Primavera<sup>a</sup>, A.M. Rossi<sup>a,b</sup>, T. Rovelli<sup>a,b</sup>, G. Siroli<sup>a,b</sup>, R. Travaglini<sup>a,b</sup>

**INFN Sezione di Catania <sup>a</sup>, Università di Catania <sup>b</sup>, Catania, Italy**

S. Albergo<sup>a,b</sup>, G. Cappello<sup>a,b</sup>, M. Chiorboli<sup>a,b,1</sup>, S. Costa<sup>a,b</sup>, R. Potenza<sup>a,b</sup>, A. Tricomi<sup>a,b</sup>, C. Tuve<sup>a,b</sup>

**INFN Sezione di Firenze <sup>a</sup>, Università di Firenze <sup>b</sup>, Firenze, Italy**

G. Barbagli<sup>a</sup>, V. Ciulli<sup>a,b</sup>, C. Civinini<sup>a</sup>, R. D'Alessandro<sup>a,b</sup>, E. Focardi<sup>a,b</sup>, S. Frosali<sup>a,b</sup>, E. Gallo<sup>a</sup>, S. Gonzi<sup>a,b</sup>, P. Lenzi<sup>a,b</sup>, M. Meschini<sup>a</sup>, S. Paoletti<sup>a</sup>, G. Sguazzoni<sup>a</sup>, A. Tropiano<sup>a,1</sup>

**INFN Laboratori Nazionali di Frascati, Frascati, Italy**

L. Benussi, S. Bianco, S. Colafranceschi<sup>19</sup>, F. Fabbri, D. Piccolo

**INFN Sezione di Genova, Genova, Italy**

P. Fabbricatore, R. Musenich

**INFN Sezione di Milano-Bicocca <sup>a</sup>, Università di Milano-Bicocca <sup>b</sup>, Milano, Italy**

A. Benaglia<sup>a,b</sup>, F. De Guio<sup>a,b,1</sup>, L. Di Matteo<sup>a,b</sup>, S. Gennai<sup>1</sup>, A. Ghezzi<sup>a,b</sup>, S. Malvezzi<sup>a</sup>, A. Martelli<sup>a,b</sup>, A. Massironi<sup>a,b</sup>, D. Menasce<sup>a</sup>, L. Moroni<sup>a</sup>, M. Paganoni<sup>a,b</sup>, D. Pedrini<sup>a</sup>, S. Ragazzi<sup>a,b</sup>, N. Redaelli<sup>a</sup>, S. Sala<sup>a</sup>, T. Tabarelli de Fatis<sup>a,b</sup>

**INFN Sezione di Napoli <sup>a</sup>, Università di Napoli "Federico II" <sup>b</sup>, Napoli, Italy**

S. Buontempo<sup>a</sup>, C.A. Carrillo Montoya<sup>a,1</sup>, N. Cavallo<sup>a,20</sup>, A. De Cosa<sup>a,b</sup>, F. Fabozzi<sup>a,20</sup>, A.O.M. Iorio<sup>a,1</sup>, L. Lista<sup>a</sup>, M. Merola<sup>a,b</sup>, P. Paolucci<sup>a</sup>

**INFN Sezione di Padova <sup>a</sup>, Università di Padova <sup>b</sup>, Università di Trento (Trento) <sup>c</sup>, Padova, Italy**

P. Azzi<sup>a</sup>, N. Bacchetta<sup>a</sup>, P. Bellan<sup>a,b</sup>, D. Bisello<sup>a,b</sup>, A. Branca<sup>a</sup>, R. Carlin<sup>a,b</sup>, P. Checchia<sup>a</sup>, T. Dorigo<sup>a</sup>, U. Dosselli<sup>a</sup>, F. Fanzago<sup>a</sup>, F. Gasparini<sup>a,b</sup>, U. Gasparini<sup>a,b</sup>, A. Gozzelino, S. Lacaprara<sup>a,21</sup>, I. Lazzizzera<sup>a,c</sup>, M. Margoni<sup>a,b</sup>, M. Mazzucato<sup>a</sup>, A.T. Meneguzzo<sup>a,b</sup>, M. Nespolo<sup>a,1</sup>, L. Perrozzi<sup>a,1</sup>, N. Pozzobon<sup>a,b</sup>, P. Ronchese<sup>a,b</sup>, F. Simonetto<sup>a,b</sup>, E. Torassa<sup>a</sup>, M. Tosi<sup>a,b</sup>, S. Vanini<sup>a,b</sup>, P. Zotto<sup>a,b</sup>, G. Zumerle<sup>a,b</sup>

**INFN Sezione di Pavia <sup>a</sup>, Università di Pavia <sup>b</sup>, Pavia, Italy**

P. Baesso<sup>a,b</sup>, U. Berzano<sup>a</sup>, S.P. Ratti<sup>a,b</sup>, C. Riccardi<sup>a,b</sup>, P. Torre<sup>a,b</sup>, P. Vitulo<sup>a,b</sup>, C. Viviani<sup>a,b</sup>

**INFN Sezione di Perugia <sup>a</sup>, Università di Perugia <sup>b</sup>, Perugia, Italy**

M. Biasini<sup>a,b</sup>, G.M. Bilei<sup>a</sup>, B. Caponeri<sup>a,b</sup>, L. Fanò<sup>a,b</sup>, P. Lariccia<sup>a,b</sup>, A. Lucaroni<sup>a,b,1</sup>, G. Mantovani<sup>a,b</sup>, M. Menichelli<sup>a</sup>, A. Nappi<sup>a,b</sup>, F. Romeo<sup>a,b</sup>, A. Santocchia<sup>a,b</sup>, S. Taroni<sup>a,b,1</sup>, M. Valdata<sup>a,b</sup>

**INFN Sezione di Pisa <sup>a</sup>, Università di Pisa <sup>b</sup>, Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa <sup>c</sup>, Pisa, Italy**  
 P. Azzurri<sup>a,c</sup>, G. Bagliesi<sup>a</sup>, J. Bernardini<sup>a,b</sup>, T. Boccali<sup>a,1</sup>, G. Broccolo<sup>a,c</sup>, R. Castaldi<sup>a</sup>,  
 R.T. D'Agnolo<sup>a,c</sup>, R. Dell'Orso<sup>a</sup>, F. Fiori<sup>a,b</sup>, L. Foà<sup>a,c</sup>, A. Giassi<sup>a</sup>, A. Kraan<sup>a</sup>, F. Ligabue<sup>a,c</sup>,  
 T. Lomtadze<sup>a</sup>, L. Martini<sup>a,22</sup>, A. Messineo<sup>a,b</sup>, F. Palla<sup>a</sup>, F. Palmonari, G. Segneri<sup>a</sup>, A.T. Serban<sup>a</sup>,  
 P. Spagnolo<sup>a</sup>, R. Tenchini<sup>a</sup>, G. Tonelli<sup>a,b,1</sup>, A. Venturi<sup>a,1</sup>, P.G. Verdini<sup>a</sup>

**INFN Sezione di Roma <sup>a</sup>, Università di Roma "La Sapienza" <sup>b</sup>, Roma, Italy**

L. Barone<sup>a,b</sup>, F. Cavallari<sup>a</sup>, D. Del Re<sup>a,b</sup>, E. Di Marco<sup>a,b</sup>, M. Diemoz<sup>a</sup>, D. Franci<sup>a,b</sup>, M. Grassi<sup>a,1</sup>,  
 E. Longo<sup>a,b</sup>, P. Meridiani, S. Nourbakhsh<sup>a</sup>, G. Organtini<sup>a,b</sup>, F. Pandolfi<sup>a,b,1</sup>, R. Paramatti<sup>a</sup>,  
 S. Rahatlou<sup>a,b</sup>, C. Rovelli<sup>1</sup>

**INFN Sezione di Torino <sup>a</sup>, Università di Torino <sup>b</sup>, Università del Piemonte Orientale (Novara) <sup>c</sup>, Torino, Italy**

N. Amapane<sup>a,b</sup>, R. Arcidiacono<sup>a,c</sup>, S. Argiro<sup>a,b</sup>, M. Arneodo<sup>a,c</sup>, C. Biino<sup>a</sup>, C. Botta<sup>a,b,1</sup>,  
 N. Cartiglia<sup>a</sup>, R. Castello<sup>a,b</sup>, M. Costa<sup>a,b</sup>, N. Demaria<sup>a</sup>, A. Graziano<sup>a,b,1</sup>, C. Mariotti<sup>a</sup>,  
 M. Marone<sup>a,b</sup>, S. Maselli<sup>a</sup>, E. Migliore<sup>a,b</sup>, G. Mila<sup>a,b</sup>, V. Monaco<sup>a,b</sup>, M. Musich<sup>a</sup>,  
 M.M. Obertino<sup>a,c</sup>, N. Pastrone<sup>a</sup>, M. Pelliccioni<sup>a,b</sup>, A. Potenza<sup>a,b</sup>, A. Romero<sup>a,b</sup>, M. Ruspa<sup>a,c</sup>,  
 R. Sacchi<sup>a,b</sup>, V. Sola<sup>a,b</sup>, A. Solano<sup>a,b</sup>, A. Staiano<sup>a</sup>, A. Vilela Pereira<sup>a</sup>

**INFN Sezione di Trieste <sup>a</sup>, Università di Trieste <sup>b</sup>, Trieste, Italy**

S. Belforte<sup>a</sup>, F. Cossutti<sup>a</sup>, G. Della Ricca<sup>a,b</sup>, B. Gobbo<sup>a</sup>, D. Montanino<sup>a,b</sup>, A. Penzo<sup>a</sup>

**Kangwon National University, Chunchon, Korea**

S.G. Heo, S.K. Nam

**Kyungpook National University, Daegu, Korea**

S. Chang, J. Chung, D.H. Kim, G.N. Kim, J.E. Kim, D.J. Kong, H. Park, S.R. Ro, D.C. Son, T. Son

**Chonnam National University, Institute for Universe and Elementary Particles, Kwangju, Korea**

Zero Kim, J.Y. Kim, S. Song

**Korea University, Seoul, Korea**

S. Choi, B. Hong, M. Jo, H. Kim, J.H. Kim, T.J. Kim, K.S. Lee, D.H. Moon, S.K. Park, K.S. Sim

**University of Seoul, Seoul, Korea**

M. Choi, S. Kang, H. Kim, C. Park, I.C. Park, S. Park, G. Ryu

**Sungkyunkwan University, Suwon, Korea**

Y. Choi, Y.K. Choi, J. Goh, M.S. Kim, B. Lee, J. Lee, S. Lee, H. Seo, I. Yu

**Vilnius University, Vilnius, Lithuania**

M.J. Bilinskas, I. Grigelionis, M. Janulis, D. Martisiute, P. Petrov, M. Polujanskas, T. Sabonis

**Centro de Investigacion y de Estudios Avanzados del IPN, Mexico City, Mexico**

H. Castilla-Valdez, E. De La Cruz-Burelo, I. Heredia-de La Cruz, R. Lopez-Fernandez,  
 R. Magaña Villalba, A. Sánchez-Hernández, L.M. Villasenor-Cendejas

**Universidad Iberoamericana, Mexico City, Mexico**

S. Carrillo Moreno, F. Vazquez Valencia

**Benemerita Universidad Autonoma de Puebla, Puebla, Mexico**

H.A. Salazar Ibarguen

**Universidad Autónoma de San Luis Potosí, San Luis Potosí, Mexico**

E. Casimiro Linares, A. Morelos Pineda, M.A. Reyes-Santos

**University of Auckland, Auckland, New Zealand**

D. Kofcheck, J. Tam

**University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand**

P.H. Butler, R. Doesburg, H. Silverwood

**National Centre for Physics, Quaid-I-Azam University, Islamabad, Pakistan**

M. Ahmad, I. Ahmed, M.I. Asghar, H.R. Hoorani, S. Khalid, W.A. Khan, T. Khurshid, S. Qazi, M.A. Shah

**Institute of Experimental Physics, Faculty of Physics, University of Warsaw, Warsaw, Poland**

G. Brona, M. Cwiok, W. Dominik, K. Doroba, A. Kalinowski, M. Konecki, J. Krolikowski

**Soltan Institute for Nuclear Studies, Warsaw, Poland**

T. Frueboes, R. Gokieli, M. Górska, M. Kazana, K. Nawrocki, K. Romanowska-Rybinska, M. Szleper, G. Wrochna, P. Zalewski

**Laboratório de Instrumentação e Física Experimental de Partículas, Lisboa, Portugal**N. Almeida, P. Bargassa, A. David, P. Faccioli, P.G. Ferreira Parracho, M. Gallinaro<sup>1</sup>, P. Musella, A. Nayak, J. Pela<sup>1</sup>, P.Q. Ribeiro, J. Seixas, J. Varela**Joint Institute for Nuclear Research, Dubna, Russia**

S. Afanasiev, P. Bunin, I. Golutvin, V. Karjavin, V. Konoplyanikov, G. Kozlov, A. Lanev, P. Moisenz, V. Palichik, V. Perelygin, M. Savina, S. Shmatov, V. Smirnov, A. Volodko, A. Zarubin

**Petersburg Nuclear Physics Institute, Gatchina (St Petersburg), Russia**

V. Golovtsov, Y. Ivanov, V. Kim, P. Levchenko, V. Murzin, V. Oreshkin, I. Smirnov, V. Sulimov, L. Uvarov, S. Vavilov, A. Vorobyev, An. Vorobyev

**Institute for Nuclear Research, Moscow, Russia**

Yu. Andreev, A. Dermenev, S. Glinenko, N. Golubev, M. Kirsanov, N. Krasnikov, V. Matveev, A. Pashenkov, A. Toropin, S. Troitsky

**Institute for Theoretical and Experimental Physics, Moscow, Russia**V. Epshteyn, V. Gavrilov, V. Kaftanov<sup>†</sup>, M. Kossov<sup>1</sup>, A. Krokhotin, N. Lychkovskaya, V. Popov, G. Safronov, S. Semenov, V. Stolin, E. Vlasov, A. Zhokin**Moscow State University, Moscow, Russia**A. Belyaev, E. Boos, M. Dubinin<sup>23</sup>, L. Dudko, A. Ershov, A. Gribushin, O. Kodolova, I. Loktin, A. Markina, S. Obraztsov, M. Perfilov, S. Petrushanko, L. Sarycheva, V. Savrin, A. Snigirev**P.N. Lebedev Physical Institute, Moscow, Russia**

V. Andreev, M. Azarkin, I. Dremin, M. Kirakosyan, A. Leonidov, S.V. Rusakov, A. Vinogradov

**State Research Center of Russian Federation, Institute for High Energy Physics, Protvino, Russia**I. Azhgirey, I. Bayshev, S. Bitioukov, V. Grishin<sup>1</sup>, V. Kachanov, D. Konstantinov, A. Korablev, V. Krychkine, V. Petrov, R. Ryutin, A. Sobol, L. Tourtchanovitch, S. Troshin, N. Tyurin, A. Uzunian, A. Volkov**University of Belgrade, Faculty of Physics and Vinca Institute of Nuclear Sciences, Belgrade, Serbia**P. Adzic<sup>24</sup>, M. Djordjevic, D. Krpic<sup>24</sup>, J. Milosevic

**Centro de Investigaciones Energéticas Medioambientales y Tecnológicas (CIEMAT), Madrid, Spain**

M. Aguilar-Benitez, J. Alcaraz Maestre, P. Arce, C. Battilana, E. Calvo, M. Cepeda, M. Cerrada, M. Chamizo Llatas, N. Colino, B. De La Cruz, A. Delgado Peris, C. Diez Pardos, D. Domínguez Vázquez, C. Fernandez Bedoya, J.P. Fernández Ramos, A. Ferrando, J. Flix, M.C. Fouz, P. Garcia-Abia, O. Gonzalez Lopez, S. Goy Lopez, J.M. Hernandez, M.I. Josa, G. Merino, J. Puerta Pelayo, I. Redondo, L. Romero, J. Santaolalla, M.S. Soares, C. Willmott

**Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, Madrid, Spain**

C. Albajar, G. Codispoti, J.F. de Trocóniz

**Universidad de Oviedo, Oviedo, Spain**

J. Cuevas, J. Fernandez Menendez, S. Folgueras, I. Gonzalez Caballero, L. Lloret Iglesias, J.M. Vizan Garcia

**Instituto de Física de Cantabria (IFCA), CSIC-Universidad de Cantabria, Santander, Spain**

J.A. Brochero Cifuentes, I.J. Cabrillo, A. Calderon, S.H. Chuang, J. Duarte Campderros, M. Felcini<sup>25</sup>, M. Fernandez, G. Gomez, J. Gonzalez Sanchez, C. Jorda, P. Lobelle Pardo, A. Lopez Virto, J. Marco, R. Marco, C. Martinez Rivero, F. Matorras, F.J. Munoz Sanchez, J. Piedra Gomez<sup>26</sup>, T. Rodrigo, A.Y. Rodríguez-Marrero, A. Ruiz-Jimeno, L. Scodellaro, M. Sobron Sanudo, I. Vila, R. Vilar Cortabitarte

**CERN, European Organization for Nuclear Research, Geneva, Switzerland**

D. Abbaneo, E. Auffray, G. Auzinger, P. Baillon, A.H. Ball, D. Barney, A.J. Bell<sup>27</sup>, D. Benedetti, C. Bernet<sup>3</sup>, W. Bialas, P. Bloch, A. Bocci, S. Bolognesi, M. Bona, H. Breuker, K. Bunkowski, T. Camporesi, G. Cerminara, T. Christiansen, J.A. Coarasa Perez, B. Curé, D. D'Enterria, A. De Roeck, S. Di Guida, N. Dupont-Sagorin, A. Elliott-Peisert, B. Frisch, W. Funk, A. Gaddi, G. Georgiou, H. Gerwig, D. Gigi, K. Gill, D. Giordano, F. Glege, R. Gomez-Reino Garrido, M. Gouzevitch, P. Govoni, S. Gowdy, L. Guiducci, M. Hansen, C. Hartl, J. Harvey, J. Hegeman, B. Hegner, H.F. Hoffmann, A. Honma, V. Innocente, P. Janot, K. Kaadze, E. Karavakis, P. Lecoq, C. Lourenço, T. Mäki, M. Malberti, L. Malgeri, M. Mannelli, L. Masetti, A. Maurisset, F. Meijers, S. Mersi, E. Meschi, R. Moser, M.U. Mozer, M. Mulders, E. Nesvold<sup>1</sup>, M. Nguyen, T. Orimoto, L. Orsini, E. Palencia Cortezon, E. Perez, A. Petrilli, A. Pfeiffer, M. Pierini, M. Pimiä, D. Piparo, G. Polese, A. Racz, W. Reece, J. Rodrigues Antunes, G. Rolandi<sup>28</sup>, T. Rommerskirchen, M. Rovere, H. Sakulin, C. Schäfer, C. Schwick, I. Segoni, A. Sharma, P. Siegrist, P. Silva, M. Simon, P. Sphicas<sup>29</sup>, M. Spiropulu<sup>23</sup>, M. Stoye, P. Tropea, A. Tsirou, P. Vichoudis, M. Voutilainen, W.D. Zeuner

**Paul Scherrer Institut, Villigen, Switzerland**

W. Bertl, K. Deiters, W. Erdmann, K. Gabathuler, R. Horisberger, Q. Ingram, H.C. Kaestli, S. König, D. Kotlinski, U. Langenegger, F. Meier, D. Renker, T. Rohe, J. Sibille<sup>30</sup>, A. Starodumov<sup>31</sup>

**Institute for Particle Physics, ETH Zurich, Zurich, Switzerland**

L. Bäni, P. Bortignon, L. Caminada<sup>32</sup>, B. Casal, N. Chanon, Z. Chen, S. Cittolin, G. Dissertori, M. Dittmar, J. Eugster, K. Freudeneich, C. Grab, W. Hintz, P. Lecomte, W. Lustermann, C. Marchica<sup>32</sup>, P. Martinez Ruiz del Arbol, P. Milenovic<sup>33</sup>, F. Moortgat, C. Nägeli<sup>32</sup>, P. Nef, F. Nessi-Tedaldi, L. Pape, F. Pauss, T. Punz, A. Rizzi, F.J. Ronga, M. Rossini, L. Sala, A.K. Sanchez, M.-C. Sawley, B. Stieger, L. Tauscher<sup>†</sup>, A. Thea, K. Theofilatos, D. Treille, C. Urscheler, R. Wallny, M. Weber, L. Wehrli, J. Weng

**Universität Zürich, Zurich, Switzerland**

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E. Aguiló, C. Amsler, V. Chiochia, S. De Visscher, C. Favaro, M. Ivova Rikova, B. Millan Mejias, P. Otiougova, P. Robmann, A. Schmidt, H. Snoek

**National Central University, Chung-Li, Taiwan**

Y.H. Chang, K.H. Chen, C.M. Kuo, S.W. Li, W. Lin, Z.K. Liu, Y.J. Lu, D. Mekterovic, R. Volpe, J.H. Wu, S.S. Yu

**National Taiwan University (NTU), Taipei, Taiwan**

P. Bartalini, P. Chang, Y.H. Chang, Y.W. Chang, Y. Chao, K.F. Chen, W.-S. Hou, Y. Hsiung, K.Y. Kao, Y.J. Lei, R.-S. Lu, J.G. Shiu, Y.M. Tzeng, X. Wan, M. Wang

**Cukurova University, Adana, Turkey**

A. Adiguzel, M.N. Bakirci<sup>34</sup>, S. Cerci<sup>35</sup>, C. Dozen, I. Dumanoglu, E. Eskut, S. Girgis, G. Gokbulut, I. Hos, E.E. Kangal, A. Kayis Topaksu, G. Onengut, K. Ozdemir, S. Ozturk<sup>36</sup>, A. Polatoz, K. Sogut<sup>37</sup>, D. Sunar Cerci<sup>35</sup>, B. Tali<sup>35</sup>, H. Topakli<sup>34</sup>, D. Uzun, L.N. Vergili, M. Vergili

**Middle East Technical University, Physics Department, Ankara, Turkey**

I.V. Akin, T. Aliev, B. Bilin, S. Bilmis, M. Deniz, H. Gamsizkan, A.M. Guler, K. Ocalan, A. Ozpineci, M. Serin, R. Sever, U.E. Surat, M. Yalvac, E. Yildirim, M. Zeyrek

**Bogazici University, Istanbul, Turkey**

M. Deliomeroglu, D. Demir<sup>38</sup>, E. Gülmез, B. Isildak, M. Kaya<sup>39</sup>, O. Kaya<sup>39</sup>, M. Özbek, S. Ozkorucuklu<sup>40</sup>, N. Sonmez<sup>41</sup>

**National Scientific Center, Kharkov Institute of Physics and Technology, Kharkov, Ukraine**

L. Levchuk

**University of Bristol, Bristol, United Kingdom**

F. Bostock, J.J. Brooke, T.L. Cheng, E. Clement, D. Cussans, R. Frazier, J. Goldstein, M. Grimes, D. Hartley, G.P. Heath, H.F. Heath, L. Kreczko, S. Metson, D.M. Newbold<sup>42</sup>, K. Nirunpong, A. Poll, S. Senkin, V.J. Smith

**Rutherford Appleton Laboratory, Didcot, United Kingdom**

L. Basso<sup>43</sup>, K.W. Bell, A. Belyaev<sup>43</sup>, C. Brew, R.M. Brown, B. Camanzi, D.J.A. Cockerill, J.A. Coughlan, K. Harder, S. Harper, J. Jackson, B.W. Kennedy, E. Olaiya, D. Petyt, B.C. Radburn-Smith, C.H. Shepherd-Themistocleous, I.R. Tomalin, W.J. Womersley, S.D. Worm

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M. Barrett, M. Chadwick, J.E. Cole, P.R. Hobson, A. Khan, P. Kyberd, D. Leslie, W. Martin, I.D. Reid, L. Teodorescu

**Baylor University, Waco, USA**

K. Hatakeyama, H. Liu

**The University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, USA**

C. Henderson

**Boston University, Boston, USA**

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A. Avetisyan, S. Bhattacharya, J.P. Chou, D. Cutts, A. Ferapontov, U. Heintz, S. Jabeen, G. Kukartsev, G. Landsberg, M. Luk, M. Narain, D. Nguyen, M. Segala, T. Sinthuprasith, T. Speer, K.V. Tsang

**University of California, Davis, Davis, USA**

R. Breedon, G. Breto, M. Calderon De La Barca Sanchez, S. Chauhan, M. Chertok, J. Conway, P.T. Cox, J. Dolen, R. Erbacher, E. Friis, W. Ko, A. Kopecky, R. Lander, H. Liu, S. Maruyama, T. Miceli, M. Nikolic, D. Pellett, J. Robles, B. Rutherford, S. Salur, T. Schwarz, M. Searle, J. Smith, M. Squires, M. Tripathi, R. Vasquez Sierra, C. Veelken

**University of California, Los Angeles, Los Angeles, USA**

V. Andreev, K. Arisaka, D. Cline, R. Cousins, A. Deisher, J. Duris, S. Erhan, C. Farrell, J. Hauser, M. Ignatenko, C. Jarvis, C. Plager, G. Rakness, P. Schlein<sup>†</sup>, J. Tucker, V. Valuev

**University of California, Riverside, Riverside, USA**

J. Babb, A. Chandra, R. Clare, J. Ellison, J.W. Gary, F. Giordano, G. Hanson, G.Y. Jeng, S.C. Kao, F. Liu, H. Liu, O.R. Long, A. Luthra, H. Nguyen, S. Paramesvaran, B.C. Shen<sup>†</sup>, R. Stringer, J. Sturdy, S. Sumowidagdo, R. Wilken, S. Wimpenny

**University of California, San Diego, La Jolla, USA**

W. Andrews, J.G. Branson, G.B. Cerati, D. Evans, F. Golf, A. Holzner, R. Kelley, M. Lebourgeois, J. Letts, B. Mangano, S. Padhi, C. Palmer, G. Petrucciani, H. Pi, M. Pieri, R. Ranieri, M. Sani, V. Sharma, S. Simon, E. Sudano, M. Tadel, Y. Tu, A. Vartak, S. Wasserbaech<sup>45</sup>, F. Würthwein, A. Yagil, J. Yoo

**University of California, Santa Barbara, Santa Barbara, USA**

D. Barge, R. Bellan, C. Campagnari, M. D'Alfonso, T. Danielson, K. Flowers, P. Geffert, J. Incandela, C. Justus, P. Kalavase, S.A. Koay, D. Kovalskyi, V. Krutelyov, S. Lowette, N. Mccoll, V. Pavlunin, F. Rebassoo, J. Ribnik, J. Richman, R. Rossin, D. Stuart, W. To, J.R. Vlimant

**California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, USA**

A. Apresyan, A. Bornheim, J. Bunn, Y. Chen, M. Gataullin, Y. Ma, A. Mott, H.B. Newman, C. Rogan, K. Shin, V. Timciuc, P. Traczyk, J. Veverka, R. Wilkinson, Y. Yang, R.Y. Zhu

**Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh, USA**

B. Akgun, R. Carroll, T. Ferguson, Y. Iiyama, D.W. Jang, S.Y. Jun, Y.F. Liu, M. Paulini, J. Russ, H. Vogel, I. Vorobiev

**University of Colorado at Boulder, Boulder, USA**

J.P. Cumalat, M.E. Dinardo, B.R. Drell, C.J. Edelmaier, W.T. Ford, A. Gaz, B. Heyburn, E. Luiggi Lopez, U. Nauenberg, J.G. Smith, K. Stenson, K.A. Ulmer, S.R. Wagner, S.L. Zang

**Cornell University, Ithaca, USA**

L. Agostino, J. Alexander, A. Chatterjee, N. Eggert, L.K. Gibbons, B. Heltsley, K. Henriksson, W. Hopkins, A. Khukhunaishvili, B. Kreis, Y. Liu, G. Nicolas Kaufman, J.R. Patterson, D. Puigh, A. Ryd, M. Saelim, E. Salvati, X. Shi, W. Sun, W.D. Teo, J. Thom, J. Thompson, J. Vaughan, Y. Weng, L. Winstrom, P. Wittich

**Fairfield University, Fairfield, USA**

A. Biselli, G. Cirino, D. Winn

**Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory, Batavia, USA**

S. Abdullin, M. Albrow, J. Anderson, G. Apollinari, M. Atac, J.A. Bakken, L.A.T. Bauerick, A. Beretvas, J. Berryhill, P.C. Bhat, I. Bloch, F. Borcherding, K. Burkett, J.N. Butler, V. Chetluru, H.W.K. Cheung, F. Chlebana, S. Cihangir, W. Cooper, D.P. Eartly, V.D. Elvira, S. Esen, I. Fisk, J. Freeman, Y. Gao, E. Gottschalk, D. Green, K. Gunthoti, O. Gutsche, J. Hanlon, R.M. Harris, J. Hirschauer, B. Hooberman, H. Jensen, M. Johnson, U. Joshi, R. Khatiwada, B. Klima, K. Kousouris, S. Kunori, S. Kwan, C. Leonidopoulos, P. Limon, D. Lincoln, R. Lipton, J. Lykken, K. Maeshima, J.M. Marraffino, D. Mason, P. McBride, T. Miao, K. Mishra, S. Mrenna, Y. Musienko<sup>46</sup>, C. Newman-Holmes, V. O'Dell, J. Pivarski, R. Pordes, O. Prokofyev, E. Sexton-Kennedy, S. Sharma, W.J. Spalding, L. Spiegel, P. Tan, L. Taylor, S. Tkaczyk, L. Uplegger, E.W. Vaandering, R. Vidal, J. Whitmore, W. Wu, F. Yumiceva, J.C. Yun

**University of Florida, Gainesville, USA**

D. Acosta, P. Avery, D. Bourilkov, M. Chen, S. Das, M. De Gruttola, G.P. Di Giovanni, D. Dobur, A. Drozdetskiy, R.D. Field, M. Fisher, Y. Fu, I.K. Furic, J. Gartner, J. Hugon, B. Kim, J. Konigsberg, A. Korytov, A. Kropivnitskaya, T. Kypreos, J.F. Low, K. Matchev, G. Mitselmakher, L. Muniz, C. Prescott, R. Remington, A. Rinkevicius, M. Schmitt, B. Scurlock, P. Sellers, N. Skhirtladze, M. Snowball, D. Wang, J. Yelton, M. Zakaria

**Florida International University, Miami, USA**

V. Gaultney, L.M. Lebolo, S. Linn, P. Markowitz, G. Martinez, J.L. Rodriguez

**Florida State University, Tallahassee, USA**

T. Adams, A. Askew, J. Bochenek, J. Chen, B. Diamond, S.V. Gleyzer, J. Haas, S. Hagopian, V. Hagopian, M. Jenkins, K.F. Johnson, H. Prosper, L. Quertenmont, S. Sekmen, V. Veeraraghavan

**Florida Institute of Technology, Melbourne, USA**

M.M. Baarmann, B. Dorney, S. Guragain, M. Hohlmann, H. Kalakhety, I. Vodopiyanov

**University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC), Chicago, USA**

M.R. Adams, I.M. Anghel, L. Apanasevich, Y. Bai, V.E. Bazterra, R.R. Betts, J. Callner, R. Cavanaugh, C. Dragoiu, L. Gauthier, C.E. Gerber, D.J. Hofman, S. Khalatyan, G.J. Kunde<sup>47</sup>, F. Lacroix, M. Malek, C. O'Brien, C. Silkworth, C. Silvestre, A. Smoron, D. Strom, N. Varelas

**The University of Iowa, Iowa City, USA**

U. Akgun, E.A. Albayrak, B. Bilki, W. Clarida, F. Duru, C.K. Lae, E. McCliment, J.-P. Merlo, H. Mermerkaya<sup>48</sup>, A. Mestvirishvili, A. Moeller, J. Nachtman, C.R. Newsom, E. Norbeck, J. Olson, Y. Onel, F. Ozok, S. Sen, J. Wetzel, T. Yetkin, K. Yi

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B.A. Barnett, B. Blumenfeld, A. Bonato, C. Eskew, D. Fehling, G. Giurgiu, A.V. Gritsan, Z.J. Guo, G. Hu, P. Maksimovic, S. Rappoccio, M. Swartz, N.V. Tran, A. Whitbeck

**The University of Kansas, Lawrence, USA**

P. Baringer, A. Bean, G. Benelli, O. Grachov, R.P. Kenny Iii, M. Murray, D. Noonan, S. Sanders, J.S. Wood, V. Zhukova

**Kansas State University, Manhattan, USA**

A.f. Barfuss, T. Bolton, I. Chakaberia, A. Ivanov, S. Khalil, M. Makouski, Y. Maravin, S. Shrestha, I. Svintradze, Z. Wan

**Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, Livermore, USA**

J. Gronberg, D. Lange, D. Wright

**University of Maryland, College Park, USA**

A. Baden, M. Boutemeur, S.C. Eno, D. Ferencek, J.A. Gomez, N.J. Hadley, R.G. Kellogg, M. Kirn, Y. Lu, A.C. Mignerey, K. Rossato, P. Rumerio, F. Santanastasio, A. Skuja, J. Temple, M.B. Tonjes, S.C. Tonwar, E. Twedt

**Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, USA**

B. Alver, G. Bauer, J. Bendavid, W. Busza, E. Butz, I.A. Cali, M. Chan, V. Dutta, P. Everaerts, G. Gomez Ceballos, M. Goncharov, K.A. Hahn, P. Harris, Y. Kim, M. Klute, Y.-J. Lee, W. Li, C. Loizides, P.D. Luckey, T. Ma, S. Nahn, C. Paus, D. Ralph, C. Roland, G. Roland, M. Rudolph, G.S.F. Stephans, F. Stöckli, K. Sumorok, K. Sung, D. Velicanu, E.A. Wenger, R. Wolf, S. Xie, M. Yang, Y. Yilmaz, A.S. Yoon, M. Zanetti

**University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, USA**

S.I. Cooper, P. Cushman, B. Dahmes, A. De Benedetti, P.R. Dudero, G. Franzoni, A. Gude, J. Haupt, K. Klaoetke, Y. Kubota, J. Mans, N. Pastika, V. Rekovic, R. Rusack, M. Sashevile, A. Singovsky, N. Tambe

**University of Mississippi, University, USA**

L.M. Cremaldi, R. Godang, R. Kroeger, L. Perera, R. Rahmat, D.A. Sanders, D. Summers

**University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Lincoln, USA**

K. Bloom, S. Bose, J. Butt, D.R. Claes, A. Dominguez, M. Eads, P. Jindal, J. Keller, T. Kelly, I. Kravchenko, J. Lazo-Flores, H. Malbouisson, S. Malik, G.R. Snow

**State University of New York at Buffalo, Buffalo, USA**

U. Baur, A. Godshalk, I. Iashvili, S. Jain, A. Kharchilava, A. Kumar, S.P. Shipkowski, K. Smith

**Northeastern University, Boston, USA**

G. Alverson, E. Barberis, D. Baumgartel, O. Boeriu, M. Chasco, S. Reucroft, J. Swain, D. Trocino, D. Wood, J. Zhang

**Northwestern University, Evanston, USA**

A. Anastassov, A. Kubik, N. Odell, R.A. Ofierzynski, B. Pollack, A. Pozdnyakov, M. Schmitt, S. Stoynev, M. Velasco, S. Won

**University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, USA**

L. Antonelli, D. Berry, A. Brinkerhoff, M. Hildreth, C. Jessop, D.J. Karmgard, J. Kolb, T. Kolberg, K. Lannon, W. Luo, S. Lynch, N. Marinelli, D.M. Morse, T. Pearson, R. Ruchti, J. Slaunwhite, N. Valls, M. Wayne, J. Ziegler

**The Ohio State University, Columbus, USA**

B. Bylsma, L.S. Durkin, J. Gu, C. Hill, P. Killewald, K. Kotov, T.Y. Ling, M. Rodenburg, C. Vuosalo, G. Williams

**Princeton University, Princeton, USA**

N. Adam, E. Berry, P. Elmer, D. Gerbaudo, V. Halyo, P. Hebda, A. Hunt, E. Laird, D. Lopes Pegna, D. Marlow, T. Medvedeva, M. Mooney, J. Olsen, P. Piroué, X. Quan, B. Safdi, H. Saka, D. Stickland, C. Tully, J.S. Werner, A. Zuranski

**University of Puerto Rico, Mayaguez, USA**

J.G. Acosta, X.T. Huang, A. Lopez, H. Mendez, S. Oliveros, J.E. Ramirez Vargas, A. Zatserklyaniy

**Purdue University, West Lafayette, USA**

E. Alagoz, V.E. Barnes, G. Bolla, L. Borrello, D. Bortoletto, M. De Mattia, A. Everett,

---

A.F. Garfinkel, L. Gutay, Z. Hu, M. Jones, O. Koybasi, M. Kress, A.T. Laasanen, N. Leonardo, C. Liu, V. Maroussov, P. Merkel, D.H. Miller, N. Neumeister, I. Shipsey, D. Silvers, A. Svyatkovskiy, H.D. Yoo, J. Zablocki, Y. Zheng

**Purdue University Calumet, Hammond, USA**

N. Parashar

**Rice University, Houston, USA**

A. Adair, C. Boulahouache, K.M. Ecklund, F.J.M. Geurts, B.P. Padley, R. Redjimi, J. Roberts, J. Zabel

**University of Rochester, Rochester, USA**

B. Betchart, A. Bodek, Y.S. Chung, R. Covarelli, P. de Barbaro, R. Demina, Y. Eshaq, H. Flacher, A. Garcia-Bellido, P. Goldenzweig, Y. Gotra, J. Han, A. Harel, D.C. Miner, D. Orbaker, G. Petrillo, W. Sakumoto, D. Vishnevskiy, M. Zielinski

**The Rockefeller University, New York, USA**

A. Bhatti, R. Ciesielski, L. Demortier, K. Goulianos, G. Lungu, S. Malik, C. Mesropian

**Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey, Piscataway, USA**

O. Atramentov, A. Barker, D. Duggan, Y. Gershtein, R. Gray, E. Halkiadakis, D. Hidas, D. Hits, A. Lath, S. Panwalkar, R. Patel, A. Richards, K. Rose, S. Schnetzer, S. Somalwar, R. Stone, S. Thomas

**University of Tennessee, Knoxville, USA**

G. Cerizza, M. Hollingsworth, S. Spanier, Z.C. Yang, A. York

**Texas A&M University, College Station, USA**

R. Eusebi, W. Flanagan, J. Gilmore, A. Gurrola, T. Kamon, V. Khotilovich, R. Montalvo, I. Osipenkov, Y. Pakhotin, A. Safonov, S. Sengupta, I. Suarez, A. Tatarinov, D. Toback, M. Weinberger

**Texas Tech University, Lubbock, USA**

N. Akchurin, C. Bardak, J. Damgov, C. Jeong, K. Kovitanggoon, S.W. Lee, T. Libeiro, P. Mane, Y. Roh, A. Sill, I. Volobouev, R. Wigmans, E. Yazgan

**Vanderbilt University, Nashville, USA**

E. Appelt, E. Brownson, D. Engh, C. Florez, W. Gabella, M. Issah, W. Johns, P. Kurt, C. Maguire, A. Melo, P. Sheldon, B. Snook, S. Tuo, J. Velkovska

**University of Virginia, Charlottesville, USA**

M.W. Arenton, M. Balazs, S. Boutle, B. Cox, B. Francis, J. Goodell, R. Hirosky, A. Ledovskoy, C. Lin, C. Neu, R. Yohay

**Wayne State University, Detroit, USA**

S. Gollapinni, R. Harr, P.E. Karchin, C. Kottachchi Kankamamge Don, P. Lamichhane, M. Mattson, C. Milstène, A. Sakharov

**University of Wisconsin, Madison, USA**

M. Anderson, M. Bachtis, D. Belknap, J.N. Bellinger, D. Carlsmith, S. Dasu, J. Efron, L. Gray, K.S. Grogg, M. Grothe, R. Hall-Wilton, M. Herndon, A. Hervé, P. Klabbers, J. Klukas, A. Lanaro, C. Lazaridis, J. Leonard, R. Loveless, A. Mohapatra, I. Ojalvo, D. Reeder, I. Ross, A. Savin, W.H. Smith, J. Swanson, M. Weinberg

†: Deceased

1: Also at CERN, European Organization for Nuclear Research, Geneva, Switzerland

- 2: Also at Universidade Federal do ABC, Santo Andre, Brazil
- 3: Also at Laboratoire Leprince-Ringuet, Ecole Polytechnique, IN2P3-CNRS, Palaiseau, France
- 4: Also at Suez Canal University, Suez, Egypt
- 5: Also at British University, Cairo, Egypt
- 6: Also at Fayoum University, El-Fayoum, Egypt
- 7: Also at Soltan Institute for Nuclear Studies, Warsaw, Poland
- 8: Also at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, USA
- 9: Also at Université de Haute-Alsace, Mulhouse, France
- 10: Also at Brandenburg University of Technology, Cottbus, Germany
- 11: Also at Moscow State University, Moscow, Russia
- 12: Also at Institute of Nuclear Research ATOMKI, Debrecen, Hungary
- 13: Also at Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary
- 14: Also at Tata Institute of Fundamental Research - HECR, Mumbai, India
- 15: Also at University of Visva-Bharati, Santiniketan, India
- 16: Also at Sharif University of Technology, Tehran, Iran
- 17: Also at Shiraz University, Shiraz, Iran
- 18: Also at Isfahan University of Technology, Isfahan, Iran
- 19: Also at Facoltà Ingegneria Università di Roma, Roma, Italy
- 20: Also at Università della Basilicata, Potenza, Italy
- 21: Also at Laboratori Nazionali di Legnaro dell' INFN, Legnaro, Italy
- 22: Also at Università degli studi di Siena, Siena, Italy
- 23: Also at California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, USA
- 24: Also at Faculty of Physics of University of Belgrade, Belgrade, Serbia
- 25: Also at University of California, Los Angeles, Los Angeles, USA
- 26: Also at University of Florida, Gainesville, USA
- 27: Also at Université de Genève, Geneva, Switzerland
- 28: Also at Scuola Normale e Sezione dell' INFN, Pisa, Italy
- 29: Also at University of Athens, Athens, Greece
- 30: Also at The University of Kansas, Lawrence, USA
- 31: Also at Institute for Theoretical and Experimental Physics, Moscow, Russia
- 32: Also at Paul Scherrer Institut, Villigen, Switzerland
- 33: Also at University of Belgrade, Faculty of Physics and Vinca Institute of Nuclear Sciences, Belgrade, Serbia
- 34: Also at Gaziosmanpasa University, Tokat, Turkey
- 35: Also at Adiyaman University, Adiyaman, Turkey
- 36: Also at The University of Iowa, Iowa City, USA
- 37: Also at Mersin University, Mersin, Turkey
- 38: Also at Izmir Institute of Technology, Izmir, Turkey
- 39: Also at Kafkas University, Kars, Turkey
- 40: Also at Suleyman Demirel University, Isparta, Turkey
- 41: Also at Ege University, Izmir, Turkey
- 42: Also at Rutherford Appleton Laboratory, Didcot, United Kingdom
- 43: Also at School of Physics and Astronomy, University of Southampton, Southampton, United Kingdom
- 44: Also at INFN Sezione di Perugia; Università di Perugia, Perugia, Italy
- 45: Also at Utah Valley University, Orem, USA
- 46: Also at Institute for Nuclear Research, Moscow, Russia
- 47: Also at Los Alamos National Laboratory, Los Alamos, USA
- 48: Also at Erzincan University, Erzincan, Turkey

